

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 27-49, 51 and 52 are pending in this application. By this amendment, Claim 50 has been canceled.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claim 50 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Lyon (Great Britain Published Specification No. 880,283); and Claim 51 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mannella et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0158469 A1, hereinafter "Mannella"). Claims 27-49 and 52 have been allowed.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the early indication of the allowance of Claims 27-49 and 52.

Claim 51 recites "a first annular housing providing in the female element in a form of an enlargement of its actual boring, extending axially from its free end to a shoulder and having a peripheral surface adjacent to the shoulder." It is respectfully submitted that these features are neither disclosed by nor rendered obvious by Mannella, Lyon or the combination thereof.

The Office Action asserts that Mannella teaches "a first annular housing (34) provided in the female element in a form of an enlargement of its actual boring, extending axially from its free end to a shoulder and having a peripheral surface adjacent to the shoulder." Applicant respectfully disagrees.

As shown in FIG. 2 of Mannella, a sealed groove 34 having a rectangular section is machined from the unthreaded area 40. The groove has a rectangular cross section. The groove 34 is delimited by two shoulders forming radial surfaces. Both shoulders are disposed between the bottom of the groove 34 and the unthreaded surface 40. In other words, the

unthreaded surface 40 has a portion extending from one of the shoulders towards the other groove 32. On the opposite side, the other portion of the unthreaded surface 40 is extending from the other shoulder of the groove until a chamfer near the end 24. However, the groove 34 is distal from the end 24. As a consequence, the groove 34 is not “a housing provided in the female element in a form of an enlargement of its actual boring extending axially from its free end to a shoulder” as recited in Claim 51. Moreover, seal 39 positioned in the groove 34 cannot be retained without the shoulder on the side of the end 24 as seen to the right in FIG.

2. As stated in Mannella paragraph [0016], “[t]he water exclusion seal system includes three interrelated components: a thread compound relief groove in the coupling inner diameter, a pressure activated resilient seal, and a groove in the coupling inner diameter for the pressure activated resilient seal.”

The Office Action further states that Lyon “teaches a male tubular element having a radially projected annular rib (22) beyond the thread with respect to its free end (Fig. 1).” Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Lyon states on page 2, lines 5-6 “[t]he fitting 18 is provided with two externally threaded lengths or portions 20 and 22.” That is, element 22 of Lyon, as can be clearly seen from inspection of the drawings, indicates a thread onto which nut 84 may be screwed. Because a thread is a helical structure, a thread of a threaded portion is not annular as recited in Claim 51.

It is respectfully submitted that the references Mannella and Lyon teach away from one another. By inspection of the respective drawings of Mannella and Lyon it can be seen that the thinner portion of the seal of Mannella projects in an outwardly direction and that the thinner portion of the seal of Lyon projects in an inwardly direction. Any combination of Mannella with Lyon would result in the respective seal of either Mannella or Lyon being

reversed in its positioning and therefore contrary to the express descriptions within the respective references thereby destroying the positioning and function of the seals.

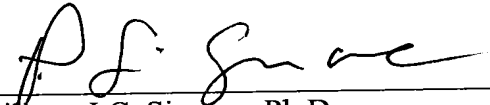
Accordingly, in light of the arguments above, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of Claim 51 be reconsidered and withdrawn, and that Claim 51 be found allowable.

Consequently, for the reasons discussed in detail above no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. Therefore, a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned representative at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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